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THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Identical letters dated 26 July 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward herewith the text of the letter dated 24 July 1999 from Dr. A. Abdullah, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.

(Signed) A. G. Ravan FARHÂDI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 24 July 1999 from the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to send to you the following texts presented as two chapters appended to this letter:

1. On the recent events related to the situation in Afghanistan;

2. The main points of the statement of the delegate of the Islamic State of Afghanistan to the Tashkent Conference on 19 July 1999.

(Signed) Dr. A. ABDULLAH
Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs

Appendix

I. ON THE RECENT EVENTS RELATED TO THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Section i

On resumption of fresh dispatch of the Taliban and the armed Pakistani groups into Afghanistan

1. Confirmed reports from Kabul indicate that the Taliban mercenaries have given a whole fresh start to their military activities in preparation for an all-out offensive on the territories administered by the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

1.1. Intelligence reports from the capital, Kabul, reveal that 5,000 fresh Pakistani so-called "students" from religious schools, members of Pakistan-based extremist organizations and Pakistani military personnel are part of the new wave of military build-ups across Afghanistan.

1.2. "Thousands of Pakistani Islamic militants and hundreds of Arabs have joined a huge build-up of Taliban forces on the front line just 20 miles north of Kabul for a 'decisive offensive' against anti-Taliban fighters", reads the Electronic Telegraph report by the Pakistani reporter Ahmed Rashid in Kabul (22 July 1999). The report adds that "transport planes from Pakistan land at night at Kabul airport with military supplies for the Taliban".

1.3. It further states that "between 3,000 and 5,000 Pakistani militants belonging to a dozen Islamic fundamentalist parties have arrived in Kabul and have set up reception centres and offices in the central district of the city, which now resembles a Pakistani suburb". Rashid also writes that "many of these militants recently fought in Kashmir against Indian forces". Attesting to Arab involvement, the report indicates that "a brigade of some 400 Arab Islamic militants from a dozen countries in the Middle East, under the control of the wanted Saudi terrorist Osama bin Laden, have moved up from their barracks in Rishkhor in Kabul and taken up positions along an eight-mile section of the front line of the city. The unit, called the '055 Brigade', has an independent command and control system and is armed and funded by bin Laden".

2. Among all other foreign extremist organizations, Osama bin Laden, accused of masterminding the 1998 twin bombings of the United States embassies in East Africa, where innocent people, including many Muslims, lost their lives, plays an important role in the ongoing operation and is actively engaged in mobilizing his terrorist network, the Al-Qaida, along the battlefronts. The agenda of the Al-Qaida under bin Laden, however, continues to also include using the territories of Afghanistan for terrorist activities and waging war against a third State, which has further exposed the Afghan people to imminent dangers.

3. The continued harbouring of terrorists and the activities of the several terror networks established in Taliban-occupied territories of Afghanistan continue to serve as a threat to Afghanistan's territorial integrity. The

responsibility for this situation lies with both Pakistan and its mercenaries, the Taliban.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan:

4. Condemns the mischievous military adventures by Pakistani military intelligence services, the ISI, in Afghanistan, which in part aims to divert the Pakistani public opinion from its recent bitter defeat in Kashmir, and invites the attention of the United Nations, the countries of the region and of the international community to the misfortune and the gloomy consequences such adventures shall bear;

5. Demands that Osama bin Laden, his associates, those active in the training bases established in association with the Pakistani ISI in Afghanistan and all other armed foreign nationals who are currently engaged in an aggressive war against the armed forces of the Islamic State of Afghanistan to immediately vacate all Afghan territories;

6. Firmly announces that all foreign military recruits to be captured by the armed forces of the Islamic State of Afghanistan will be considered as criminals and would be directed to the security authorities of the State for prosecution and punishment in accordance with Afghanistan's criminal code of 1976, which prescribes severe punishment against those who are committing crimes against the internal and external security of the State;

7. Strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and considers it unjustifiable under any circumstances and whatever the consideration of a political, ideological, religious or other nature that may be invoked to justify it;

8. Vigorously declares its readiness to join the common efforts of the international community to strengthen further international cooperation between States and international organizations to prevent, combat and eliminate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, wherever and by whomsoever committed;

9. Earnestly expects that the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan would promptly verify and clearly report to the Secretary-General and the Security Council on the presence of foreign mercenaries and of foreign military personnel in Afghanistan.

Section ii

On Pakistani armed personnel in Afghanistan

Pakistani military personnel in Afghanistan

10. Pakistani nationals in the foreign-imposed Afghan conflict - in the tens of thousands - include the following:

(a) Paramilitary groups such as the Sipah-e-Sahaaba, the Sepah-e-Tayeba and the Harakat-ul-Ansar, most of whom are from Punjab;

(b) Frontier militia forces from the North-West Frontier Province;

(c) Military units from the Churat and Sahi Wal divisions and officers and soldiers from the Pakistani military, mostly Punjabis, whose numbers are on the rise.

Presently, a great majority of these groups have been stationed in the garrisons of Reesh-Khor (Kabul) and Chehle-Tan (Paghman), and also in Kunduz.

11. It must also be brought to light that in the foreign-imposed Afghan conflict, five categories of groups are conducting war under the "Taliban" name:

(a) The Pakistani ISI, which maintains the general command and control of military initiatives;

(b) Pakistani-armed Taliban under the ISI order;

(c) Afghani Taliban;

(d) Extremist groups from Egypt, Yemen, Algeria, Bangladesh, Uzbekistan and other countries;

(e) The terrorist network of Osama bin Laden, which controls the Arab nationals' activities and has established centres around Ningarhar, Helmand and Kunduz. For the past two months, a new base has been added in the Hadda farm, in eastern Afghanistan. The Pakistani ISI conducts training sessions for these terrorists inside the Taliban-controlled territories, accorded with full Taliban support. Lately, at the suggestion of the Pakistani ISI, the Taliban are providing safe haven for terrorists from Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan.

12. It has to be remembered that on 20 August 1998 the United States of America launched missile attacks targeting terrorist training camps in south-eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistani border. Those killed in the cruise missile attacks were all Pakistanis.

United States officials' admission

13. United States officials present at the meeting between President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Sunday, 4 July 1999, cast their doubts as to whether Mr. Sharif would be able to guarantee a Pakistani military pull-back to the ceasefire line. It was undoubtedly obvious that the Pakistani military had undertaken the initiative, and that still remains the case. This is an admission by United States authorities of the very fact that the Islamic State of Afghanistan has continuously stated to United States officials, that such military adventures, including the Pakistani war in Afghanistan by the Taliban, are hegemonic initiatives by ISI. The Government of Pakistan has no practical authority in the matter.

A blow to Muslims

14. In Afghanistan, the Pakistani mi litary's offices are directed at the specific objective of Pakistani fanat ic religious groups with the claim of implementing the Islamic "sharia", de spite the fact that its implementation in Pakistan is not achieved. The call t o fight against Muslim peoples of Afghanistan has been labelled a "jiha d", when in reality it continues to cause heavy tolls on the Muslim population due to these religious, sectarian and ethnic wars.

15. The hegemonic adventurism of the Pakistani ISI has been catalytic in the creation of dangerous tensions and th e exacerbation of security problems in South and Central Asia. The Islamic State of Afghanistan intends to promote friendly relations with all of its ne ighbouring States, including Pakistan, for the purpose of enhancing regional coo peration, extremely vital in the next millennium and in the age of globaliz ation and mutual interdependence. So long as Pakistan does not and cannot steer its policy away from hegemonic tendencies towards achieving the aforesaid goals , military build-up and tensions will be high in the region.

Se ction iii

On imposition by th e United States of America of financial sa nctions on the Taliban

16. The Islamic State of Afghanistan warmly welcomed imposition by the United States of financial sanctions against the Taliban militia in Afghanistan under the executive order signed by Preside nt Clinton on 5 July 1999, following the visit to Washington by Pakistani Prem ier Sharif.

17. The Islamic State of Afghanistan earnestly expects that the Security Council would also, in follow-up to i its agenda previously deliberated upon, re-examine consideration of the measu re. However, effectiveness of the sanctions is bound to political decis ions of the Security Council.

18. The Islamic State of Afghanistan hopes that the sanctions would generate far-reaching effects, leading to curt ailing and ultimately halting the Taliban's steady financial resources, which pri marily include (a) trafficking of narcotics and (b) individual and private donati ons from some Middle Eastern countries.

19. The Islamic State of Afghanistan considers as imperative that the United Nations sanctions would be enforced i n a preventive manner so as to practically contain the Pakistani military intel ligence (ISI) in misusing international financial grants for supplying arms, ammunition, military equipment, training or any other military support to the Ta liban and/or facilitating acquisition by the Taliban of such means through the int ernational arms Mafia.

II. MAIN POINTS OF THE STATEMENT OF THE DELEGATION OF THE ISLAMIC STATE OF AFGHANISTAN TO THE TASHKENT "SIX-PLUS-TWO" CONFERENCE, 19 JULY 1999

Section i

General notions

20. The Islamic State of Afghanistan supports the Tashkent Declaration of 19 July 1999. The general notions in the paragraphs of the Tashkent Declaration are basically important for durable and lasting peace in Afghanistan. These principles are the foundation of a neutral and independent Afghanistan, desirous to contribute positively - in the atmosphere of mutual respect - to the interests of all countries, including those in the region - as well as the present situation and prospective solutions to the problems.

21. The respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan is clear to all. Certainly, without due respect for the sovereignty of Afghanistan, all efforts aimed at finding a solution for Afghanistan shall be self-nullifying.

22. Most of the people concerned about the situation of Afghanistan have increasingly been convinced that the Afghan problem does not and will never have a military solution. Afghanistan is a country formed through the fraternal unity of its diverse peoples and ethnic groups - based on mutual respect among them. The surmise that the hegemony and priority of a single ethnic group can restore peace and unity in Afghanistan is practically impossible. As is visible from the current situation in Afghanistan, the effort for a military domination of Afghanistan by one group will not deliver the sound result of peace and prosperity. Rather, on the contrary, it shall undoubtedly beget doomed consequence, as has been the case in Afghanistan through armed and unarmed popular resistance. This resistance will be particulary more momentous when the people sense that a foreign hand is behind such a hegemonistic scheme.

23. It is imperative to establish a broad-based Government - based on Islamic values and the participation of all ethnic groups of Afghanistan - with due extension of equal rights, mutual respect and cooperation between all.

24. The Afghan nation, through full observation of the noble principles of the religion of Islam and its aspirations, believes and advocates human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people, which on an international level have been adopted and confirmed by the family of nations, as well as the Charter of the United Nations, international conventions and international agreements to which Afghanistan has been a party.

25. It is also pertinent that the Afghan nation, with due observation of Islamic injunctions and thereby with respect for the dignity of human rights, including the rights of minorities and the rights of women (particularly their rights to education and work), shall be in a position to organize its life. Otherwise, security at gunpoint cannot continue, and the claim of such security has no meaning to the people of Afghanistan. The Taliban have not established

"security" in the country despite their imposition of a brutal military occupation.

26. The organization of political life in Afghanistan can only be established in the framework of democratic institutions and the right of self-determination for the people. This undertaking can be achieved in conjunction and in accordance with basic democratic rules, such as the participation of all Afghan nationals in the socio-economic and political life, including the participation of Afghan women, who comprise more than half of the Afghan population. Afghan women, in particular, as in the rest of the Muslim countries, shall participate in the development of the country based on the needs of the contemporary world. This is why in the land that the Islamic State of Afghanistan envisions, women shall have the right to be members of the Parliament and the Cabinet.

Section ii

Historical identity of Afghanistan

27. Afghanistan has had a particular and specific political identity and existence for centuries, and especially during the more recent ones, the Islamic State of Afghanistan is the sole political entity which represents the continuity of Afghanistan as a sovereign nation, much in ascendance since 1747. Afghanistan is not a part of the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent. The Afghan people have sacrificed infinitely for the past two decades for their independence. History has been a witness to that, just as it was a witness during the three Anglo-Afghan wars, in which British India participated. Even now, we defend Afghanistan against treacherous and mischievous foreign plans for wanting to transform it into a protectorate State. What we struggle for is the continuity of existence of Afghanistan and its identity as a single and independent political entity. In this struggle, we are hopeful that with the grace of God we will succeed, and therefore highly anticipate that the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan in the future shall be made feasible with the assistance of Afghanistan's friends throughout the world.

28. In this age of interdependence and globalization, particularly at the dawn of the next millennium, Afghanistan cannot afford to remain isolated, particularly with a kind of intransigent extremism.

Section iii

Basic principles and a broad-based Government

29. The Islamic State of Afghanistan has advocated the following principles as the bedrock of the future political system: the principles of independence and international cooperation; the principles of democracy and political pluralism; the principles of election and delegation of authority to local administrations; and the principle of human rights, including the rights of women.

30. It is not in the interest of our nation to find the Afghan soil divided into two or more political regions, or a kind of ceasefire or truce prevailing

which would act as an impetus towards the disintegration or gradual partitioning of Afghanistan.

31. Therefore, any kind of ceasefire must be declared simultaneously with the formation of a broad-based Government with the active participation of all ethnic groups. The Afghan nation has become totally sick and tired of the continuation of war, confrontation, killing and militarization of cities. Hence, it feels the absolute necessity for the establishment of such a Government, a fact that has been well-recognized in the texts of relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

Section iv

Continued foreign military intervention in Afghanistan

32. Twenty years ago, Afghanistan became a direct target of the super-Power competition, in which it paid a very high price, including more than 1.5 million lives and the destruction of the infrastructure and of the economy. The Afghan Mujahideen martyrs in their war of liberation have imprinted with their blood a new chapter in the history of peoples fighting to preserve their independence.

32.1 Today, once again, the events unravelling in the Indian subcontinent have culminated in the intervention of one neighbour in our internal affairs. The doctrine of "strategic depth", which signifies the transformation of Afghanistan into a subservient entity under the Pakistani thumb, still receives much pre-eminence in the strategies and minds of some intelligence networks and policy makers within the Pakistani intelligence community. It is on this basis that thousands of armed Pakistani personnel from our neighbouring country have prepared themselves to fight against our armed forces as we speak, waiting to seize the opportunity to strike. Pakistan, as has been its customary practice, still claims it plays no role in this regard. In the case of Kashmir, Pakistan first claimed that the Government and the army of Pakistan were not involved. This was a malicious lie, and soon the army confessed to its full involvement. On the contrary, the world and the United Nations know better. Their observations bear witness to the Punjabi prisoners of war that we have in our custody.

32.2 It must be noted that the cessation of fighting in Afghanistan will lift many dangers from Pakistan and shall be greatly beneficial to that State, in fact quite catalytic in the restoration of friendly relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

32.3 Unfortunately, the propaganda staged by the Pakistani military intelligence community during the last 10 years has been as if some Afghan leaders held some kind of enmity against Pakistan, a pretext which has been used to justify the empowerment of its favourites in Afghanistan.

32.4 It is the strong conviction of the Islamic State of Afghanistan that Afghanistan is not only a neighbour but also a potential friend of Pakistan. Any assistance by Afghanistan extended towards Pakistan, such as facilitation of transit routes, south-north and east-west, shall be beneficial to all countries

in the region, including Afghanistan and Pakistan, while reciprocally, Afghanistan would anticipate the continued provision of economic and transit cooperation on the part of Pakistan.

32.5 Friendly relations between the peoples of Afghanistan and Pakistan must be based on the equality of sovereign States contingent on the continuity of mutual respect.

32.6 Patriotic Afghans expect an immediate call-back of all Pakistani armed personnel, militiamen, so-called "volunteers" and other foreign armed groups from the Afghan soil. This shall contribute towards achieving peace, an encouraging fact only when the words shall match the deeds.

32.7 Whereas, during the past years, numerous messages of friendship have been repeatedly conveyed to the Pakistanis, the Afghans still await a reply. The Islamic State of Afghanistan wishes the friendship and mutual respect of Pakistan, considering the Pakistani people as a fraternal nation.

Section v

Terrorism, non-alignment, narcotic drugs, extremism and peace

33. Afghanistan is not willing to permit its territories to be utilized for the purposes of terrorism, including harbouring terrorists and terrorist elements. As a founding member of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, and as recently as last year during the Twelfth Summit in Durban, South Africa, Afghanistan helped in the draft of the paragraph on terrorism of the final document, in which the Head of State, President Burhanuddin Rabbani, participated.

33.1 It is unbearable for us to see that in Afghanistan terrorist training camps have been established by foreign hands, where terrorists are trained at the expense of Afghan blood before they are assigned against other lands and peoples. In fact, the extent of heinous crimes by these terrorists has entailed mass deportation, mass displacement and mass killings.

34. Afghanistan sees the principle of non-alignment as a guarantor of its non-aligned status, that is, it is not willing to act or be used on behalf of expansionist tendencies of a specific country, even if the third country may claim to be a member of the Non-Aligned Movement.

34.1 Afghanistan cannot be aligned with Pakistan or any other country. Afghanistan, as a non-aligned State, will not enter into any political or military agreement or arrangement against another State within or outside the region, and hereby declares Afghanistan's permanent neutrality.

35. It is a well-known fact that many parts of Afghanistan under the Taliban rule have attained an ascending drug-production capability, which shall be fought in a concerted approach both within as well as outside the region.

36. Extremism in all forms and manifestations only harbours despotism, and our nation knows the kind of tyrannical monopoly such an extremism imposes on the fundamental and inalienable rights and freedoms of our people.

37. The Afghan nation aspires to peace and wishes to be a means for the consolidation of peace in the region.